

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A genetically altered ~~animal~~ mouse defective in Caspase-9 expression due to a defective Caspase-9 gene.
2. **(Canceled)**
3. **(Currently Amended)** A method of producing a genetically altered ~~animal~~ mouse defective in Caspase-9 expression, the method comprising the steps of:
 - a. providing an isolated DNA sequence comprising a genomic DNA sequence encoding a mouse Caspase-9 that is defective in that it does not contain the pentapeptide motif QACXG (SEQ ID NO: 7), wherein "X" is arginine ~~[[of]]~~ or glycine;
 - b. introducing said isolated DNA sequence into ~~an~~ a mouse embryonic stem cell under conditions that cause said genomic DNA sequence to stably integrate into a chromosome of said stem cell;
 - c. incorporating said stem cell into a mouse blastocyst ~~blastocyst of said animal~~ to produce a chimeric mouse animal;
 - d. breeding said chimeric mouse animal ~~to an animal that expresses functional Caspase-9~~ to produce mice an animal heterozygous for functional said genomic DNA sequence encoding said defective Caspase-9, thereby producing a genetically altered mouse defective in Caspase-9 expression;
 - e. ~~interbreeding said animals heterozygous for functional Caspase-9 expression to produce said animal deficient in Caspase-9 expression.~~
4. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 3, wherein said isolated DNA sequence additionally comprises a selectable marker gene.
5. **(Original)** The method according to claim 4, wherein said marker gene is a neo gene.
- 6-7. **(Canceled)**
8. **(New)** The genetically altered mouse according to claim 1, wherein said mouse is heterozygous for the defective Caspase-9 gene.

9. (New) The genetically altered mouse according to claim 1, wherein said mouse is homozygous for the defective Caspase-9 gene.
10. (New) A genetically altered mouse defective in Caspase-9 expression, wherein said mouse is characterized by a DNA sequence encoding a Caspase-9 protein that does not contain the pentapeptide motif QACXG (SEQ ID NO: 7).
11. (New) The method of claim 3, further comprising:
 - e. interbreeding said mice heterozygous for the genomic DNA sequence encoding the defective Caspase-9 to produce homozygous mice defective in Caspase-9 expression.